

Representative Luis Garcia's 2010 Legislative Update



CAPITOL OFFICE

405 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300
Phone: (850) 488-9930

DISTRICT OFFICE

1225 SW 8th Street
Miami, FL 33135-4003
Phone: (305) 325-2501

LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

Matthew Monica

DISTRICT SECRETARY

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Representative Garcia's
e-newsletter please
send an email to
[Luis.Garcia@
Myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:Luis.Garcia@Myfloridahouse.gov),
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Welcome to
Representative
LUIS GARCIA'S
e-newsletter

ECONOMIC GROWTH

I was proud this session to support new policies to promote the recovery of our state's economy. For me, job creation for Floridians was job number one.

It was important to me to meet the expectations of Florida's families and businesses who asked the Legislature to encourage new businesses, promote job creation and remove barriers to economic growth.

I supported legislation to keep Floridians working, prevent layoffs, to bring a measure of economic stability. For instance, we passed a bill on the first day of session to hold down a dramatic increase in unemployment tax rates for businesses for the next two years. These increases would have resulted in layoffs for Floridians.

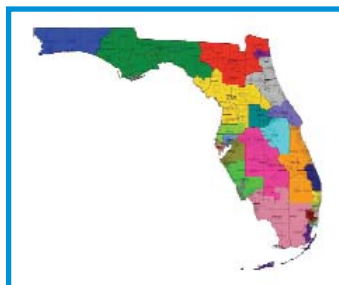
The Legislature also passed a \$200 million jobs package (over 3 years) that is designed to make Florida more economically competitive and to encourage companies to invest in our state and hire Floridians.

Throughout the session, I supported various efforts that help Florida consumers, including a reinstatement of Florida's back-to-school sales tax holiday that benefits Florida's families. The tax holiday provides a one-time, three-day sales tax holiday for clothing and other school supplies purchased from August 13-15, 2010.

These are tough economic times, but we must provide for roads and bridges, courtrooms, protect our natural resources, provide for law enforcement and prisons, and fund our schools so that we may soon have a world-class education system for students and educators.



REDISTRICTING



I am proud to have led the debate against House Joint Resolution 7231, a proposed constitutional amendment regarding the establishment of legislative and congressional districts.

If approved by the voters this November, advocates of the constitutional amendment claimed it would clarify questions and legal concerns with Amendments 5 and 6, two so-called "FairDistricts" initiatives already approved for the November 2010 ballot. But in my view, HJR 7231 isn't necessary and would severely undercut the FairDistricts initiatives, which are placed on the ballot after 1.7 million Floridians signed petitions seeking to reform Florida's controversial reapportionment process.

The constitutional amendments are of critical concern to me because the 2012 redistricting of legislative and congressional districts could prove pivotal to the long-term political leadership of our state.

Representative Luis Garcia's Accomplishments

Working With THE LEGISLATURE

BILLS SPONSORED BY Rep. LUIS GARCIA AND PASSED BY THE LEGISLATURE

HORSE SLAUGHTER LEGISLATION SIGNED BY GOVERNOR



A new law, championed by State Representative Luis Garcia and State Senator Victor Crist will give law enforcement officials throughout Florida a new tool to aid in their fight against the illegal slaughter of horses.

Florida Governor Charlie Crist signed the "Ivonne Rodriguez and Victoria McCullough Horse

Protection Act" into law and the act will take effect starting July 1, 2010.

The new law provides a deterrent to the illegal slaughter and sale of horse meat by increasing the penalties and imposing mandatory minimum jail sentences.

JUVENILES IN STATE CUSTODY

A measure sponsored by Rep. Luis Garcia to ensure that juveniles in custody are properly watched for was passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Crist this year.

The new measure will protect our youth's health by defining ordinary medical care, mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, and developmental disabilities services.



SENATE BILL 6



The Legislature sent to the governor this year a bill that I believed would punish teachers and harm education in our state.

The legislation would have based a larger number of teachers' future salary increases primarily on students' learning gains as determined by the students' performance on Florida's controversial standardized test, the FCAT. Teachers hired after July 1 would not have been eligible for the current 7-percent salary bonus for obtaining the prestigious National Board Certification.

It would have allowed the state to have unprecedented authority to withhold 5 percent of school districts' funding to force districts to revise teacher contracts.

Governor Crist ultimately vetoed Senate Bill 6.

BUDGET

The state budget fails, in my opinion, to meet the needs of Floridians. Therefore, *I voted against the \$70.4 billion spending plan, and I have urged Governor Charlie Crist to veto at least portions of the financial package.*



In my opinion, the budget doesn't hold education harmless. While it increases the annual per-student funding by \$1.22, school officials say their expenses, including insurance, retirement and utilities will outstrip that increase. In terms of overall school funding, this budget presents the second-worst per student funding level since 2006. What's more, the budget includes whopping new university tuition hikes of up to 15 percent, just as it cuts scholarship awards under the Bright Futures program.